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527 621 sacred days, and if the latter were then to be neglected, we should have a community in which various activities were prohibited on one day of the week, and the institution so arising would differ very little from the Hebrew Sabbath. It is possible that the Todas show in an early stage the institution of a Sabbath in which the whole community has not yet settled on a single and joint holy day.

SACRED NUMBERS

788 801 Certain numbers recur with great frequency in the dairy ceremonial, and may be regarded as having a special sanctity on this account. There seems to be a general preference for uneven numbers, and this preference comes out very strongly in the *tesherst* ceremony, in which an uneven number of men must take part on any one occasion. The number of men performing this ceremony together must be three, five, seven, nine, &c.

In the dairy ritual the numbers which occur chiefly are three, seven and nine, but other numbers have also been singled out in other branches of Toda lore. The numbers which occur in ceremonial may now be considered in detail.

Three.—A large proportion of the ritual acts of the dairy are performed three times, usually with the accompaniment of the sacred syllable. *Om* uttered thrice, once with each performance of the act. This three-fold performance is especially marked in the ceremony of putting milk or curds on the sacred bells and in the ceremonial drinking of buttermilk. In the ordination ceremonies, the number occurs less frequently. The purificatory drinking is always done seven times or some multiple of seven, but after drinking, the candidate rubs himself three times with the shoots or bark, and, at the ordination of a *palol*, the candidate drinks three times seven on several occasions. Other acts during the ordination of the *palol* are also performed thrice, and the same number occurs in the ordination of the *kaltmokh*.

Acts are performed thrice with special frequency in the ceremonial of the *ti*, and, at the ordinary dairy, this number is especially connected with the 'feeding' of the sacred

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bell, and there is no doubt that it is a number regarded as especially sacred. Whenever the sacred syllable *Oñ* is used, it is nearly always uttered thrice, and there seems to be a special association between the number three and this word.

In the *erkumptthpimi* ceremony three branches of *tudr* leaves are used, and they and the log with which the calf is killed are passed round the body of the animal thrice. Later in the ceremony three pieces of wood are thrown over the fire.

In the ceremonies connected with childbirth, the woman drinks thrice on various occasions, in the *pursütpimi* ceremony the name of the bow is asked and the answer given three times, and in the ceremony of name-giving three grains of barley are put into the mouth of the child and three into his hair.

At the funeral ceremonies, earth is thrown three times on the corpse and three times into the pen, the body is swung on the fire three times, and at the final scene of the *azaramkedr* the man who rings the bell goes round the burial place of the ashes thrice. Three *ovibnikdrs* are thrown by the man who crosses the pathway of the dead. The number three is not limited to the dairy ritual, but is of frequent occurrence in the whole of Toda ceremonial.

The number three also appears in connexion with magical or semi-magical practices. The various methods of treatment used by the *utkòren* are carried out three times and never more frequently than this, and the sufferer who drinks hot water to allay the effects of fright also does this thrice. A remedy is probably held to be more potent if repeated the same number of times as in the case of so many sacred acts.

Five.—This number does not occur in the dairy ceremonial except in certain ceremonies at the Nòdrs *ti* which are repeated five times because there are five groups of buffaloes belonging to this dairy. The number in this case has, however, no ceremonial significance, and is merely a consequence of the fact that one *palol* at this *ti* has three groups and the other two groups of buffaloes. The only other occurrence of the number is at the Kars *ti*, where the ancient lamp probably had five cavities, but even this is doubtful.

The number five comes in one place into Toda magic. The

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The number five comes in one place into Toda magic. The
754 sorcerer, who wishes to injure one who has not granted his
801 request, hides five stones tied together with hair in the thatch of his enemy's hut.

788 *Six.*—This number does not occur in the dairy ceremonial,
801 but it seems to be regarded as an auspicious number in some ways. In Teitnir's lament for his wife, reference is made to the hope that they might have had six children and six buffaloes, and in the prayer on the occasion of the ear-piercing ceremony, one clause runs "may he have six sons."

Six sticks are used to make the artificial dairy of the hand-burning ceremony, but this is an obvious result of the fact that the dairy has to have two rooms.

Seven.—This number is especially prominent in the ordination ceremonies. The purificatory drinking out of leaf-cups is always done seven times or some multiple of seven, the *palikartmokh* drinking seven times only, the *wursol* seven times seven, and the *palol* three times seven, seven times seven and nine times seven at different periods of his prolonged ordination ceremonies. At the dairies of Taradr and Kanòdrs, the number occurs in a different form, seven different kinds of leaf being used in the purificatory ceremonies.

The number occurs again in connexion with the lamp. At the Nòdrs *ti* and at the Pan *ti*, and possibly at other dairies, there used to be lamps, each of which had seven cavities and seven wicks. Some of these lamps have been lost, but two remain at the dairies mentioned. I have already referred to the fact that some of the ancient lamps were said to have had five wicks, but it seems clear that in the only two examples which survive there are seven wicks, and it is possible that this was the number in all.

Another occurrence of the number seven is in the old dairies of the Nòdrs clan which had seven rooms. The funeral dairies, which are undoubtedly very ancient institutions, have three rooms, and the Nòdrs dairies, also undoubtedly ancient, had seven, but I heard of no case in which a dairy had four, five, or six rooms.

Outside the dairy ceremonial, the only occurrence of this number is in the lament of Teitnir for his wife, in which he speaks of their visiting seven courts and seven ships.

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It is perhaps significant that the number seven should be a sacred number to a people who have so highly developed the cult of different days of the week. It is possible that the purificatory drinkings of the ordination ceremonies were at one time performed seven times with the idea that the candidate was sanctifying himself for each day of the week, but at the present time it is clear that the act is performed seven times because this number is prescribed by custom. It would be interesting to ascertain whether the sanctity of the number seven occurs predominantly in the religious cults of peoples who have a seven-day week. 788 801

Nine.—This number only occurs in the dairy ceremonial during the ordination of the *palol* when the seven-fold purification with *tudr* is performed nine times.

Twelve.—I only met with this number once, in the prayer at the *pilimivtiti* ceremony, when the expression "12 years" is used as if it were equivalent to "for ever."

Sixteen and *Eighteen.*—The chief interest of these numbers is that they are used in connexion with the gods. There are said to be 1600, 1800 gods, and these numbers are mentioned in the prayer of the Kanòdrs dairy and in the legends. The numbers are probably used in the way in which we should use the word 'infinite,' but there must be some reason why they should have been chosen. 776 801

The number 18 occurs in another connexion in the rule that the *palol* should perform a certain ceremony after eighteen years of continuous office. 801

I have one possible clue to the choice of the number eighteen. The Todas say that a species of Strobilanth growing on the Nilgiris as a shrub only flowers once in eighteen years. They call this shrub *pavèat*, and it was in flower during the year of my visit. Albert, my interpreter, had only seen it in flower once or twice, but had not paid special attention to the duration of the flowering period. The number of times that several Todas had seen the flowers agreed approximately with their probable ages. Thus, Kutadri saw the flowers in 1902 for the third time, having seen them for the first time when he was twelve years old. This would make his age forty-eight, which seemed from other sources of information to be 824 801 805

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801 814 805 approximately correct. The Todas use the flower as a record of age, and some Todas are reputed to have seen the flowers seven times, which, taking five years as the age when they were first seen, would make them over 110 years.

There is another Strobilanth called *tirparikat* which is said to flower every twelve years, and another every six. I do not know of any confirmation of the flowering periods of these plants except the last, which probably refers to *Strobilanthes sexennis*.

Whether the Toda belief in the eighteen-year period of the plant they call *pivkat* is correct or not, it seems probable that it may have furnished the suggestion for the special position taken by the number eighteen in Toda lore.

CHAP. XXI.

765 768 177

In the very early morning of the first of a two days' ceremonial, and long before these guests have begun to arrive, the family of the deceased have a little private ordinance of their own; in burning all his personal property, such as his stick or staff, the honnu or milk vessel, and clothes: also a *flute* or flageolet, and a model of *a bow with bamboo 'strings,' and arrows.*[2] I could not ascertain any reason whatever for this musical instrument and these spurious weapons being burnt. Be it particularly borne in mind that the Todas have no sense of music and do not possess a flute in the whole tribe: that they never hunt, and have no weapons of the chase. These toys are made by the Kotas entirely for the occasion. Thus it was, I experienced some difficulty in buying the bow, which will be found in photograph No. 15. The first question asked of the man who purchased it for me from the Kota, was 'Who is dead?'

765 535 801

The opening public ceremony of the day, is a kind of dance performed by from twenty to fifty men. The dance I witnessed was monotonous enough. It consisted of the body of men, keeping step whilst striding round and round like the spokes of a wheel; each spoke having three men arm in arm: and all exclaiming, rather than shouting, 'A! U! A! U!'[3] in time with their steps. I could trace nothing symbolic in the exhibition except that strange number three, which I notice in all religious matters, to be constantly appearing. It may be that the dance and shout are both merely a Toda mode of giving vent and expression to a festive state of mind.

765 Whilst this dance is being carried on by the men, the women prepare food in the hut described in the last Chapter, which has been repaired or renewed for this occasion. Here all the guests assemble, the two sexes sitting apart. The women of the family serve out the supplies from the diminutive door to

[2] Captain Forsyth, in his 'Highlands of Central India,' writes of the Bygas, 'their bows are made entirely of the bamboo, "string" and all.'

[3] The Toda word for *I shout*, is 'A! U! bisharthken,' or *I call out* A! U! [i.e., the bara kêdu, or second funeral—Analyst]